

## Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03  
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAJ-01  
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8656  
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN  
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AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN  
AMEMBASSY DUBLIN  
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AMEMBASSY MADRID  
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USMISSION EC BRUSSELS  
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AMEMBASSY BERLIN  
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USNMR SHAPE  
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DIA WASHDC  
USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS  
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX  
AMCONSUL LYON  
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AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 00976

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, FR, PINT  
SUBJECT: FRENCH INTERNAL POLITICAL SCENE -- DECEMBER

1976

SUMMARY: IT WAS NEITHER THE BEST OF TIMES NOR THE WORST OF TIMES. FRANCE FOUND ITSELF WITH A NEWLY REVITALIZED GAULLIST PARTY; WITH POLLS INDICATING THAT MITTERRAND (NO SURPRISE) WOULD TAKE OVER 40 PERCENT OF THE YOUTH VOTE IN A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION; WITH UDR AND RI BOTH PROPOSING CANDIDATES FOR THE MAYORALTY OF PARIS; WITH THE UNION OF THE LEFT UNDER CONSIDERABLE PRESSURE THANKS TO INEPT MANEUVERING BY THE PS LEFT-WING CERES IN THE PARISIAN MAYOR'S RACE; AND WITH THE FORMATION OF THE RPR AND AN UPSWING IN JACQUES CHIRAC'S POPULARITY. IN SHORT, IT WAS SOMETHING OF A HO-HUM MONTH IN WHICH HEADLINES TENDED TO MASK MORE BASIC REALITIES. END SUMMARY.

1. BUILDING A NEW GAULLIST PRESENCE: A DECEMBER 5TH REVIVAL MEETING KICKED OFF THE FORMATION OF THE RPR (SEE PARIS 35997) WHILE MINISTER OF THE INTERIOR MICHEL PONIATOWSKI MANAGED TO TAKE THE ONE ACTION -- EVICTING STRIKERS FROM THEIR TWO-YEAR LONG OCCUPATION OF THE PARISIEN LIBERE -- GUARANTEED TO CLOSE DOWN ALL FRENCH NEWSPAPERS FOR A FEW DAYS AND HENCE PUBLICITY OF THE RPR MEETING, THE PARTY SPENT THE REST OF THE MONTH BUILDING UP ITS ORGANIZATION, STAFF AND FINANCIAL BACK-ING. JACQUES CHIRAC, LOOKING MORE AND MORE LIKE A CON-TENDER FOR THE PRESIDENCY, HAS BEEN BARNSTORMING IN RELATIVELY SAFE DISTRICTS AND SPEAKING TO RELATIVELY SAFE CROWDS. TOUCHY SUBJECTS SUCH AS EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THE JAMAICAN MONETARY ACCORDS ARE ONLY GIVEN DISCREET ATTENTION IN THE HOPES OF AVOIDING MORE PROBLEMS BEFORE THE MARCH MUNICIPAL ELECTION, AND THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULED JANUARY 17TH TELEVISED ADDRESS WILL SUPPOSED-  
LY SET ASIDE RUMORS OF A RETURN TO PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE FRENCH VOTING SYSTEM, A PARTICULAR BETE NOIRE OF THE GAULLISTS. THUS, DESPITE THE MUTED POWER STRUGGLE BETWEEN CHIRAC AND THE PRESIDENT, THE MAJORITY CONTINUES TO LIVE TOGETHER IN A WILLING SUS-PENSION OF HOSTILITIES. CHIRAC'S CONTINUAL ATTACKS ON THE PS APPEAR TO BE, AT LEAST ON FIRST GLANCE, A MORE PAYING PROPOSITION. WITH VOTERS EXPRESSING SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE FORCED MARRIAGE BETWEEN THE RELATIVELY MODER-ATE PS AND THE UNCERTAIN PC, CHIRAC APPEARS TO BELIEVE THAT HE CAN BRING BACK TO HIS FOLD NUMBERS OF VOTERS WHO WENT THE OTHER WAY THE LAST TIME AROUND.

2. THE COMMON PROGRAM -- LOTS OF FURY, RELATIVELY LITTLE SOUND: UNDER FIRE FROM CHIRAC AND PONIATOWSKI, THE

PARTIES OF THE COMMON PROGRAM HAVE NOT BEEN DISPLAYING ANYTHING MORE IN THE WAY OF UNITY THAN THEIR MAJORITY COUNTERPARTS. WITH BARELY TWO MONTHS TO GO TO THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS, PC AND PS ARE BOTH PUSHING AT EACH OTHER FOR MORE SEATS IN MUNICIPAL COUNCILS, FOR GREATER REPRESENTATION ON VARIOUS SECTORAL LISTS AND FOR WHAT APPEARS TO BE A TEST OF STRENGTH LOOKING FORWARD TO THE LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN 1978. WHAT MAKES THE JOB DOUBLY DIFFICULT IS THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE ON THE DECLINE COMPARED TO THE PS AND ARE NOT PLAYING BY THE RULES WHICH SHOULD GOVERN A PARTY WHOSE FORTUNES ARE FALLING. WHERE THE PCF IS STRONG, IT IS DEMANDING SOMETHING MORE THAN ITS FAIR SHARE OF SEATS; WHERE IT

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IS WEAK, IT IS DEMANDING WHAT IT CALLS HISTORIC REPRESENTATION -- WHICH AMOUNTS TO SOMETHING MORE THAN ITS PREVIOUS PERCENTAGE OF THE VOTES WOULD NORMALLY GIVE IT. A FURTHER COMPLICATION IS THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF THE PS ARE DEALING DIRECTLY WITH THE PCF AND ARE NOT RESPECTING THE BASIC RULES OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTROL (SEE BELOW FOR A PARTICULARLY STRIKING EXAMPLE). WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT THE TWO MAJOR LEFT PARTIES WILL BE ABLE TO RESOLVE MOST OF THEIR DIFFERENCES OVER MUNICIPAL LISTS AND THAT FRENCH VOTERS PROBABLY WILL NOT BE CALLED UPON TO RESOLVE POWER POSITIONS ON THE LEFT THROUGH FIRST ROUND PRIMARY VOTING (PARIS 37795).

3. PARIS MIGHT ACTUALLY GET A MAYOR IF EVERYONE GETS HIS ACT TOGETHER: "WATCHING THE CANDIDATES TRY TO LINE UP," SAID ONE DEPUTY, "IS LIKE TRYING TO KEEP TRACK OF 47 MONKEYS IN A CAGE." AFTER GISCARD'S DECISION TO PUT MICHEL D'ORNANO INTO THE RUNNING -- AND HIS SUBSEQUENT NAMING OF CLAUDE COULAIS AS STATE SECRETARY ATTACHED TO THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH, A MOVE WHICH FREED D'ORNANO FOR SERIOUS CAMPAIGNING FOR THE MAYORALTY OF PARIS, THE UDR HAD TO CHOOSE BETWEEN ACCEPTING A FAIT ACCOMPLI AND FIGHTING A BLOODY CAMPAIGN WITHIN THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY. IT CAME AS NO PARTICULAR SURPRISE WHEN THE GAULLISTS CHOSE THE LATTER COURSE (SEE PARIS 34478). WHILE THE LEFT MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED TO REJOICE AT THIS FORMIDABLE DISPLAY OF MAJORITY INTERNECINE WARFARE, TO CAREFULLY WORK OUT ITS OWN CANDADICIES AND TO ORESENT VOTERS WITH A UNIFIED LIST, IT IN FACT DID NONE OF THESE  
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THINGS. ON DECEMBER , GEORGES SARRE, A CERES FOUNDER AND ONE OF THE PS' MOST CONTROVERSIAL FIGURES, ANNOUNCED THAT HE WOULD HEAD THE LEFT'S LIST IN PARIS. IN ONE STROKE SARRE THUS MANAGED TO ALIENATE A BIG CHUNK OF THE PCF, WHICH FELT IT HAD NOT BEEN PROPERLY CONSULTED, HIS OWN PARTY'S NATIONAL HIERARCHY, WHICH SAW IN HIS ACTION ONLY THE MOST OPPORTUNISTIC KIND OF CERES MANEUVERING, A MAJOR PART OF CGT/CFDT OPINION, WHICH WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO SEE A MODERATE SOCIALIST TAKE THE CANDIDACY, AND THE NON-CERES PARISIAN SOCIALISTS. WHILE WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT SARRE'S CANDIDACY WILL STAND, WE ARE FAIRLY SURE THAT GAULLIST AND RI POLITICIANS CANNOT HELP BUT BE COMFORTED BY WHAT HAS ALREADY COME TO BE CALLED "SARRE'S STUPIDITY."

4. HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS: WITH MOST DEPUTIES AND NATIONAL POLITICAL LEADERS CONCENTRATING ON PREPARING THE MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS IN THEIR HOME DISTRICTS, FOCUS FOR MOST NEWS HAS SHIFTED A BIT BEYOND THE RELATIVELY PAROCHIAL LIMITS OF PARIS. THE NEWS FROM THE PROVINCES IS NOT PARTICULARLY GOOD FOR THE MAJORITY: A NUMBER OF RPR DEPUTIES IN THE RHONE-ALPS REGIONS ARE FINDING THAT THE PCF HAS MADE IMPORTANT INROADS INTO THEIR STRENGTH IN THE AREA; THE SAME PATTERN SEEMS TO HOLD TRUE IN A FEW SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICTS. BUOYED UP BY A PARIS-MATCH POLL WHICH SHOWS NO SITTING PS DEPUTY LOSING HIS SEAT IN THE EVENT OF PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS (PARIS 37677) PS PARLIAMENTARIANS ARE DETERMINED TO LEND THEIR PRESTIGE AND POWER TO THE ELECTION OF THEIR OWN MUNICIPAL LISTS. THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEY CAN TRANSFER THEIR POPULARITY TO LOCAL CANDIDATES IS A TEST WHICH THE PS BELIEVES WILL BE INDICATIVE OF HOW THINGS MIGHT GO IN THE FUTURE. THE SOCIALISTS ARE RELATIVELY HAPPY WITH NATIONAL LEVEL POLLING BUT ARE WATCHING THE LOCAL RESULTS WITH GREAT INTEREST. SENIOR PS ELECTION SPECIALISTS ARE PRIVATELY SAYING THAT THEY'VE ALREADY WON ENOUGH CONTESTS WITH 60

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PERCENT OF THE VOTE; NOW, IN THEIR TERMS, THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO FOCUS ON SWING DISTRICTS. THE MAJORITY CONTINUES TO REACH AGREEMENTS IN MOST CITIES. WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS -- PARIS BEING BY FAR THE MOST NOTABLE -- WE BELIEVE THE MAJORITY MAY HAVE AN EASIER TIME REACHING AGREEMENT THAN WILL THE LEFT. FAILURE TO REACH AGREEMENT IN PARIS, A FAILURE WHICH INVOLVES NOT JUST THE MAYORAL CANDIDATES BUT SEVERAL CITY COUNCILORS AS WELL, IS A VISIBLE REMINDER THAT THE PRESIDENTIAL MAJORITY IS

FAR FROM SOLID,(THOUGH POLLS SHOW THAT PRIMARIES WILL  
NOT NECESSARILY HURT THE MAJORITY IN PARIS AND MAY EVEN  
HELP IT IN CERTAIN PROVINCIAL CITIES.)

5. THE POLITICS OF PAUCITY: WITH LITTLE HARD NEWS  
OTHER THAN THE RPR ON WHICH TO FOCUS, POLITICAL PUNDITS .  
IN DECEMBER SPENT A LOT OF TIME READING ENTRAILS.  
GISCARD TOOK HIS MINISTERS TO LILLE, FIEFDOM OF PS NUM-  
BER TWO PIERRE MAUROY, FOR A CABINET MEETING; THE INEVIT-

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USMISSION USBERLIN  
USNMR SHAPE  
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DIA WASHDC

USDEL MC NATO BRUSSELS  
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ABLE FALLOUT WAS A REVIVAL OF SPECULATION THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS STILL THINKING ABOUT SOME SORT OF CENTER/LEFT COALITION. THE PURPOSE OF THE LILLE EXERCISE WAS TO GIVE MAUROY'S OPPONENT IN THE MARCH MUNICIPALS, STATE SECRETARY FOR MAIL AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS NORBERT SEGARD, PROMINENT DISPLAY DURING THE MEETING. EQUALLY IMPORTANT, MAUROY USED THE OCCASION OF HIS MEETING WITH GISCARD TO PRESS HOME THE INADEQUACIES OF THE GOVERNMENT'S REGIONAL PROGRAM AND TO INSIST ON SUPERIOR PROTOCOL FOOTING TO SEGARD. ON BALANCE, MAUROY SCORED POINTS AND BECAME THE BENEFICIARY OF THE GISCARD-INDUCED SPOTLIGHT IN LILLE. POLITICAL SOOTHSAYERS ALSO TOOK THE MONTH OF DECEMBER TO LOOK AT THE RESULTS OF A CHIRAC/BARRE MEETING ON THE 18TH. IN THE READING OF MOST OBSERVERS, THE ENCOUNTER PUT BOTH RI AND RPR ON NOTICE THAT THE BRIDGES BETWEEN THE TWO PARTIES, ALTHOUGH STRAINED, ARE NOT BURNED. A CURIOUS NOTE WAS SOUNDED IN MID-MONTH WHEN JEAN CHARBONNEL LAUNCHED HIS FEDERATION DES REPUBLICAINS DE PROGRES' A GROUP WHICH SEEKS TO RALLY DISSIDENT GAULLISTS TO THE OPPOSITION. THIS IS THE FOURTH OR FIFTH SUCH CHARBONNEL EFFORT; NONE OF THE PREVIOUS ONES HAVE PRODUCED ANY IMPORTANT POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES.

6. THE "AVEU" AFFAIR: COSTA-GARVAS' FILM, "THE CONFESION", PROVIDED THE BACKDROP FOR AN INTERESTING SIDELIGHT ON PCF MENTALITY. APPEARING ON FRANCE'S TOP-RATED TV SHOW, SCREEN FILES, PCF "SHADOW FOREIGN MINISTER" JEAN KANAPA, A LAST-MINUTE SUBSTITUTE FOR THE MORE LIBERAL PIERRE JUQUIN, FOUND HIMSELF UNDER RELENTLESS ATTACK FROM HIS OPPONENTS, ALL OF WHOM GLEEFULLY REMINDED

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KANAPA OF THE ROLE HE HAD PLAYED IN THE STALINIST PURGES  
WITHIN THE PCF. THE "AVEU AFFAIR"  
GOT EXTENSIVE PUBLIC-  
ITY AND ONCE MORE PUT THE PCF IN ITS TRADITIONAL POSITION  
OF SEEKING TO REASSURE FRENCH VOTERS THAT IT HAD BECOME  
LEGITIMATE, A PARTY LIKE OTHER PARTIES, IN SPITE OF ITS  
FIERCELY COLD WAR BACKGROUND.

7. POLLS - STILL THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN: DECEMBER'S  
POLLS GAVE EVERYONE BUT GISCARD A SLIGHT SHOT IN THE ARM.  
THE PRESIDENT'S POPULARITY, HOWEVER, HIT AN ALL-TIME LOW  
WITH SLIGHTLY MORE FRENCHMEN DISAPPROVING RATHER THAN  
APPROVING GISCARD'S PERFORMANCE. THE EVENT MARKED A  
FIRST IN THE HISTORY OF THE FIFTH REPUBLIC, BUT IT  
SHOULD NOT BE READ WITH TOO MUCH CONCERN -- THIS IS ONE  
POLL WHICH WAS TAKEN AT A TIME WHEN MOST FRENCH COMMENT-  
ATORS ARE REFLECTING ON THE MOOD OF MOROSITY WHICH HAS  
OVERTAKEN FRANCE IN RECENT WEEKS. MITTERRAND, WHOSE  
SCORE AMONG YOUTHFUL VOTERS HAS RECENTLY BEEN GOING UP,  
CONTINUED TO HOLD 49 PERCENT IN THE LEFT POPULARITY POLL  
(A REGULAR FEATURE OF THE SOFRES/FIGARO POLL) WHILE  
SIMONE VEIL CONTINUES TO FAR OUTDISTANCE ALL HER COMPET-  
ITORS (WITH 54 PERCENT); CHIRAC SHOWED A SLIGHT UPSWING  
WITH 39 PERCENT OF THOSE POLLED CONTINUING TO EXPRESS  
CONFIDENCE IN HIM. IN FACT, BY MONTH'S END, FRANCE WAS  
READY FOR A GOOD SCANDAL -- AND IT GOT IT.

8. IR DEPUTY AND FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS JEAN DE BROGLIE WAS GUNNED DOWN ON A PARISIAN  
STREET THE DAY BEFORE CHRISTMAS. THE PURPORTED KILLERS  
WERE FOUND AND CONFESSED IN ALMOST RECORD TIME, AND  
INTERIOR MINISTER PONIATOWSKI GAVE WHAT MANY THOUGHT WAS  
A PREMATURE AND HIGHLY PREJUDICIAL NEWS CONFERENCE NAM-  
ING THE SUSPECTS -- EVEN BEFORE THEY WERE FORMALLY  
CHARGED -- AND ANNOUNCING THAT THE CASE WAS SOLVED.  
DESPITE "PONIA'S" OPTIMISTIC PRONOUNCEMENT, IN SUCCEED-  
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ING DAYS VARIOUS HOLES IN THE CASE HAVE BEEN GROWING  
EVER LARGER. THE "DE BROGLIE AFFAIR" HAS BEEN GETTING  
FRONT PAGE TREATMENT IN MOST MAGAZINES AND NEWSPAPERS --  
REFLECTING PERHAPS THE DEARTH OF MORE SUBSTANTIVE FARE --  
AND CONTAINS ALL THE HINTS OF SCANDAL AND INNUENDO THAT  
THE FRENCH SEEM TO THRIVE ON: DE BROGLIE'S "SECRET"  
FINANCIAL DEALINGS, POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT AND/  
OR COVER-UP, AND EVEN INTIMATIONS THAT FORMER PM JACQUES  
CHIRAC IS TRYING TO ENCOURAGE MEDIA COVERAGE TO EMBARRASS  
THE IR PARTY. WHILE DE BROGLIE'S MURDER MAY VERY WELL  
TURN OUT TO BE A RATHER MUNDANE CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY, ITS  
PROMINENCE IN THE MEDIA UNDERSCORES THE FACT THAT SUCH



STORIES ARE BECOMING MORE AND MORE POLITICIZED IN A  
PRE-ELECTORAL ATMOSPHERE.  
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## Message Attributes

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